This is tested by an ant (chinaka) being placed therein, and if it drowns the child is given to a wet-nurse and the mother is medically treated. This custom is particularly prevalent amongst riverain Nupe.

Subsequent children are thoroughly spoilt until they reach the age of three or four years when, amongst the well-to-do, at all events, the mother is thought to be too fond to make a good guardian. Girls are usually weaned at the age of three years, boys not until they are four. The children may, therefore, be sent right away to a boarding school for some ten years, or the relations may take them to a day school, arranging their marriages, and in fact divorcing them so entirely from their own parents that the only connection left is inheritance. If the grandfather is alive he distributes the children amongst their uncles and aunts on the male side, generally in order of seniority. They call them father and mother, and when grown-up would visit them and give them money before going to their true parents. The foster-parents would equally go to their foster children for support in their old age, and only to their own children in the last resort.

A successful Mallam will have a school containing fifty or sixty children, amongst whom he keeps up a rigid discipline by means of the rod, and if a child attempts to run away it is put into leg-irons. There are whole holidays on Thursdays and Fridays, but on working days the hours are 4 to 6 and 7 to 11 a.m., and 2 to 4 and 7 to 8 p.m. Day scholars miss the first two hours. The children learn the Koran, and reading and writing in Arabic characters, then their own language, and then Haussa; sewing, and at a later stage sums. Boys and girls work and play together, but when girls reach a marriageable age they are taught by the Mallam's wives. There are no regular holidays, and children remain for some ten years without a break. When they leave the school the Mallam receives a fee of 20,000 cowries, in addition to which there may or may not be complimentary presents given. The young scholar, on reaching home, goes to salute the Sarki and all elders, and receives a dash from each to celebrate the home-coming.

The same customs that apply to the commoner apply to the Chiefs and Emirs. His children are also sent to school, and he never keeps his first-born. In questions of marriage it is he who takes the first step, and he will often give his daughters in marriage to the merest talaka, and may even marry a peasant girl himself without incurring reproach.

The Emir of Bida keeps up an elaborate state. He sends food to all visitors to his capital and provides them with accommodation. He summons Chiefs to audiences, and holds a levee in the palace courtyard every Friday morning between 7 and 8 a.m., where all or any of his subjects assemble to salute him but he does not enter into conversation with anyone then.